

projects that would be reassessed, with only two exceptions—one exception in Arkansas, one exception in Georgia—which I personally asked that they be reassessed when the corps did not agree.

But these projects need to be looked at very closely. I personally don't believe that any of the projects ought to be built, but I will keep an open mind until after the complete review process is concluded and will then make my own decision as far as the President's position is concerned. But I can assure you that the Corps of Engineers and Interior Department have been intimately involved in the preparation of the list and the reassessment of the list. It's a preliminary screening. Public hearings will conclude for me what my own position would be.

Ed Bradley [CBS News].

VIETNAM

Q. Mr. President, on the subject of Vietnam, if you feel the United States is not obligated to uphold the terms of the Paris Peace Accords because of the North Vietnamese offensive that overthrew the South Vietnamese Government, do you feel, on the other hand, any moral obligation to help rebuild that country?

THE PRESIDENT. I can't say what my position would be now on future economic relationships with Vietnam. I think that could only be concluded after we continue with negotiations to see what their attitude might be toward us.

My own natural inclination is to have normal diplomatic relationships with all countries in the world. Sometimes there are obstacles. I believe there are now 14 nations with whom we do not have diplomatic relationships. I don't know what the motivations of the Vietnamese might be. I think part of the motivation might be to be treated along with other nations in economic assistance from our country,

and in trade, and development of their fairly substantial natural resources, including oil.

Other considerations might be political in nature. They might very well want to balance their friendship with us with their friendship with the Soviet Union and not be completely dependent upon the Soviet Union. That is just a guess on my part. But I am willing to negotiate in good faith. But as far as describing what our economic relationship might be with Vietnam in the future after the relationships are established, I just couldn't do that now.

Q. Mr. President, with that understanding and your hesitancy to disclose a position before negotiations are started—

THE PRESIDENT. I don't have a position.

Q. —beyond that, do you still feel that if that information on those American servicemen who are missing in action is forthcoming from the Vietnamese, that then this country has a moral obligation to help rebuild that country, if that information is forthcoming?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, the destruction was mutual. You know, we went to Vietnam without any desire to capture territory or to impose American will on other people. We went there to defend the freedom of the South Vietnamese. And I don't feel that we ought to apologize or to castigate ourselves or to assume the status of culpability.

Now, I am willing to face the future without reference to the past. And that is what the Vietnamese leaders have proposed. And if, in normalization of relationships, there evolves trade, normal aid processes, then I would respond well. But I don't feel that we owe a debt, nor that we should be forced to pay reparations at all.

THIRD WORLD DEBT

Q. Mr. President, yesterday several Congressmen accused your economic policies as being dictated by New York banks. Now, your plans for bailing out New York through using the IMF with a hyper-inflationary process indeed does sound like a recent speech that David Rockefeller made in which he called for hyper-inflating the advanced sector and imposing so-called demand economies on the Third World, which means massive austerity.

Now, at the same time, over recent weeks a number of our NATO allies—

THE PRESIDENT. What is your question?

Q. My question is, over recent weeks a number of our NATO allies have indicated that they would rather see the problem of Third World debt resolved through a debt moratorium. And I am just wondering if there is any chance that you'd go along with our allies in that direction, or if you would insist on this kind of hyper-inflationary bailing out?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, I have had no entreaties from David Rockefeller concerning the New York problem, nor have I had any of our allies that have called on me to join them in a debt moratorium. I am not in favor of a debt moratorium.

ZAIRE

Q. Mr. President, would you mind telling us what our commitments are in Zaire and what the ramifications of those commitments might be to us?

THE PRESIDENT. We have no outstanding commitments in Zaire. Over a period of years, President Mobutu has been a friend of ours. We've enjoyed good relationships with Zaire. We have substantial commercial investments in that country.

After the recent, very disruptive conflict within Zaire when the country was

finally formed—a number of years ago—it has been fairly stable since then. Zaire was involved, I think at least indirectly, in the Angolan conflict, and there are some remaining hard feelings between Angola and Zaire on that part. Some of the Katangans who lived in the southern part of Zaire are now involved in trying to go back into the area where they formerly lived.

We have no hard evidence or any evidence, as far as that goes, that the Cubans or Angolan troops have crossed the border into Zaire. We look on them as a friendly nation, and we have no obligations to them as far as military aid goes. But we have been cooperating in exchanging information with the Belgian Government, the French Government, and others, just to try to stabilize the situation and to lessen the chance of expanding the conflict.

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

Q. Mr. President, I don't ask this question in a churlish way or an argumentative way—

THE PRESIDENT. I'm sure you don't. [Laughter]

Q. —but taking—recalling the unwillingness of the United States to intervene at the time of the Hungarian uprising or at the time of Dubcek's ouster in Czechoslovakia, what do you really think that you can accomplish for political dissidents in the Soviet Union, not in other parts of the world, but in the Soviet Union? And I have a followup I would like to ask.

THE PRESIDENT. Why don't you ask your followup now and I will try to answer.

Q. My followup is this: You are saying that all of the evidence that you have from Mr. Brezhnev is that he is willing to go forward or he is receptive to SALT II negotiations.